

# **First Night Home With Your New Baby Maltese**

The first night home with your new puppy can be a trying experience for both of you. It's the first time your puppy has spent the night away from his mother and littermates. Because dogs are pack animals, your puppy knows instinctively that being separated from the pack is dangerous. Whining and crying at night is your puppy's way of calling for his pack to find him. Of course it does nothing to comfort you. If your puppy has endured a long car ride or plane ride, he may be considerably stressed. Following are some suggestions to help him relax and warm up to you. Upon arriving home, place your puppy in a roomy pen with food, water, soft bed, chews, toys, and wee pad. He will feel safer initially if he has some 'space' of his own to relax and get his bearings. Sit outside the pen and talk gently to him. Offer him some cubed, boiled boneless, skinless, chicken breast from your hand. This will a) make him like you b) establish you as his source of food, the pack leader, and c) help insure that his blood sugar doesn't drop too low from the stress of his ordeal. Once your puppy appears to be relaxing, open the door to his pen and invite him to come out. When he is sufficiently relaxed and ready to begin bonding with you, he will come out.

With a little preparation and patience, you can make the most of the first night with your new puppy.

## **What to do before bedtime**

Shortly before you go to bed, spend some time playing with your Maltese puppy. You want him to be tired enough to sleep soundly. Try not to let him nap within an hour or two of bedtime or else your puppy will be ready to play when you're ready to sleep. Just before bed, take your puppy to his soiling area and wait for him to go. When he does praise him. This reinforces good behavior and begins the house training process. If he doesn't go within 10 minutes or so, he may not have to go. Try again in a half hour and so on, until he finally does go.

## **Where a Maltese puppy should sleep**

If possible, you should let your puppy sleep in your bedroom to reduce the chances of whining or crying at night. Also, the constant contact throughout the night will help your puppy adjust to you and establish you as pack leader. The method that has worked best for me is to place the puppy in a small carrier or purse with enough room for him to stretch out and turn around comfortably, and then place the carrier on the nightstand next to your bed so he can see, hear, and smell you. Turn out the lights and talk softly to him for a moment to let him know you are there. For a very fussy puppy, the carrier can be placed at the top-middle of the bed right next to you. Once he gets this routine down, usually after a week or so, you can begin to move the carrier every night a bit further until it is finally located where you would eventually like him to sleep.

## **Stop Maltese puppy crying at night**

If and when your Maltese puppy starts crying at night, you need to decide if he has to go to the bathroom or if he's looking for attention. If he's been quiet for a few hours and suddenly starts to cry or whine, he may need to go out. Puppies have small bladders, so you'll likely have to take him out at least once during the night. A good rule of thumb is to add one to your puppy's age in months and that's generally how long he can go without a trip to potty. So a two-month-old puppy can wait three hours. That means your puppy will probably need to go out at least twice during the night.

If your puppy is crying and you're sure it's not for need of relieving himself, and he isn't thirsty, reach down and soothe him a little. If he continues to whine, try a gruff "Quiet" or "SHHH". If all else fails, ignore him. Tough love may be difficult, but eventually your puppy will learn that crying at night gets him nowhere. The more persistent you are in your approach, the quicker the situation will be resolved. If you're stern one minute and sympathetic the next, your puppy will only be confused and his behavior will continue.

## **In the morning**

Get up right away and take your puppy to his soiling area. Carry him. Don't let him walk there or he may be tempted to go before he gets there. Let him empty everything out, and praise him when he's finished. As with any new baby, you may not get much sleep the first few nights with your new puppy. If you're patient and understanding, your puppy will learn what you expect of him when it's time to sleep. You both should wake up rested and ready for the day after a few nights together.